Q&A

Employee Spotlight:

Charlene, Coding Manager

What do you do at KIWI-TEK?

I am a coding manager for KIWI-TEK. I help with onboarding new coders, training, QA, schedules and reports. I serve as a direct point of contact for our clients and help them with fulfilling their staffing needs.

How long have you worked here?

10 years!

What makes KIWI-TEK different from other coding companies?

KIWI-TEK works with our clients to develop unique partnerships that tailor to their specific needs—a kind of boutique coding company. I have worked with dozens of clients during my tenure. Our customers decide what they want from our teams. We offer coding and revenue cycle services from highly experienced professionals. Our coders help customers fill voids, ranging from short-term coding support to assistance with new program installations, such as Cerner or some of the 3M applications such as 3M360 or AuditExpert. Adding new hires can be time consuming and stressful. Partnering with KIWI-TEK comes with management and auditing personnel to allow for a smoother transition.

How has your career grown since starting at the company?

I began working with KIWI-TEK as a part-time coder hoping to supplement my income at the time. I loved having schedules that were flexible and generally at my discretion. At the time, a remote work environment and even having electronic records were new concepts. I loved the idea of working for a hospital in Washington D.C. while sitting in my office in Texas. Eventually I left my supervisory position at my local hospital and joined the KIWI-TEK management team as an assistant coding manager. In that role, I assisted with training new coders and providing quality checks. Soon after, I was promoted to coding manager. In this role, I work more directly with our customer contacts to manage scheduling, onboarding coders, QA and various client deliverables. I am fortunate to work with a wonderful team of assistant managers and auditors. In conjunction with our coders, we strive to provide first-class coding services.

What was your biggest takeaway from COVID-19 as a medical coder?

In real time, we saw how the data we process becomes live, statistical information. With the pandemic, we had a new diagnosis along with guidelines that changed several times in relation to what was happening in the world. Watching the nightly news, we could almost fact-check the trends while viewing what our clients' patients were experiencing. As a team we always joke about ever-changing guidelines, but there hasn't been a time when we had to revisit how we coded a diagnosis (COVID-19) so frequently. The information we code is important in so many realms, but never more critical than in a global pandemic.

What advice do you have for new coders joining the field?

Find a position to get your foot in the door. Most companies and hospitals/clinics are looking for experienced coders. It is rare that a fresh graduate or newly credentialed coder will land a remote position. So how do you get that experience if you are new to the field?

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Look into business office, medical records, admissions or even medical office secretary type positions. Just learning the inner workings of how admissions originate, tests are ordered, or even how claims are processed can provide a wealth of education that will assist with future positions perhaps in the Health Information Management field. As you become more experienced, look for lateral moves that will continually provide the exposure and comfort level to keep those opportunities coming.

What was your first job?

My first job in revenue cycle was a charge entry analyst. I worked specifically with ED visits. Once the ED coders reviewed the medical records and were able to print a coding summary for ED visits, they passed the coding summary to me. I then manually entered the charges and codes into a system that sent the codes to the billing department applications for processing. With that position, I had the first opportunity to get my eyes on some codes. I reached the point where I could recognize if something looked off or inconsistent, such as a missing modifier or high-level E/M with a simple reason for a visit. I worked with the coders on anything I found out of line and eventually was allowed to code the visits myself. I had never heard about medical coding prior to that position. I aspired to be an elementary teacher, but my direction changed. Soon after being allowed to code ED visits, I successfully obtained my CCA certification from AHIMA. From there, I tried new coding arenas including surgery, observation and inpatient coding. I then sat for and successfully obtained the AHIMA CCS certification. Years later, I took on data and reimbursement analysis, working on statistics for hospital and state reporting. Not long after, I assumed a supervisory role in our local hospital's Health Information Management Department.

Favorite food?

I am from Texas. Hands down, tacos in any fashion.

What do you like to do in your free time?

When not playing chauffeur for my very busy kiddos, I am a huge Texas Longhorns fan. I love to follow college football and baseball and often go to Austin to catch some games!

Working at KIWI-TEK has been such a blessing to my family. I work for and with the best people around and they are genuinely like family. I believe in our work and our people and love that we can offer such good quality services to our clients.

We are growing! Join a company culture where people are encouraged to ask questions, learn from their peers and above all, enjoy their important role as a medical coder.
kiwi-tek.com/medical-coding-jobs

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